

Governor's Web Publishing Policy

Introduction

NIC Inc., under contract with the State of Tennessee, maintains the state's official Web site, also known as "the Portal." NIC maintains the Portal main page, secondary Portal pages and certain other pages located on NIC servers. However, state agencies and departments maintain their own main and secondary pages. Each agency or department's communications officer and/or web publisher is responsible for the accuracy of content on those pages. Web publishers and communications officers will work together to ensure each agency or department's Web site is current and helpful to citizens of Tennessee. The Governor's Office reserves the right to review all Web pages to ensure consistency. This policy is intended for Web publishers, Web application developers and communications officers.

Objectives

Below are the objectives which guide this policy:

- Present state government as a seamless entity
- Allow the user to get to information and services quickly and efficiently
- Provide access for as many users and devices as possible

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I. Seamless Government

A. Domain Names

At present, the only name approved for marketing the State of Tennessee is www.Tennessee.gov. Exceptions may be made for certain promotional URLs (e.g., picktnproducts.org, tnvacation.com) and must be approved by the Governor's Office. While other domain names are still accessible, they should not be openly publicized.

B. Requirements for all pages

All pages should meet the following requirements:

1) White background

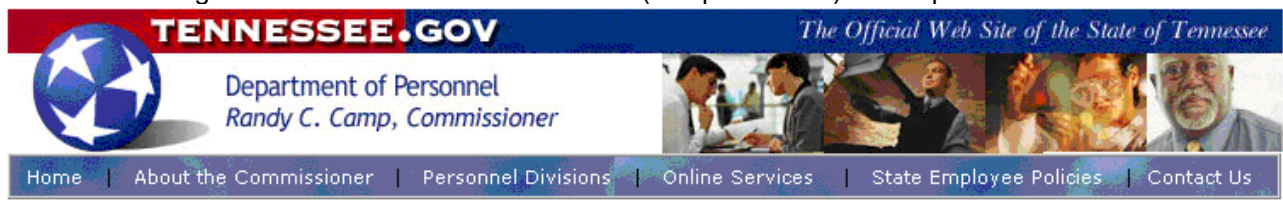
All pages should have a white background.

2) Graphical Header

Each agency will have its own customized graphical header provided by the Governor's Office. Each Department will have the opportunity to suggest alternate images for the header.

3) Horizontal Navigation

Each Department's main navigation links should be listed horizontally below the graphical header. This navigation bar should contain a *home* link, a *contact us* link, and an *online services* link. The *home* link should be the first and should link to the department's banner page, and the *contact us* link should be the last link and should link to a page with departmental contact information which should include phone number, physical address and email contact(s). The *online services* link should link to a page containing a listing of the department's online services (this page should contain a link to the state's online services page), if applicable. If a department has no online services the link should point to the state's online services page. The appropriate code for background and link colors will be provided with the template. The bar should contain between 6 and 8 total links. Below the navigation bar should be a horizontal rule (750 pixels wide). Example:



4) Left Navigation Bar

This should be between 150-200 pixels wide and should contain links to departmental divisions or special programs. Flash buttons should NOT be used for these links. Rollover images or plain text are both acceptable styles provided they follow accessibility guidelines.

5) Meta Tags for "Language," "Title," And "Description"

Each page should specify the language, and have <title> and <meta name="description"> tags.

<html lang="en"> Simply adding **lang="en"** inside the <html> tag declares the natural language of the document, which assists search engines and speech synthesizers in reading the page. The "en" signifies English, whereas pages in Spanish would have <html lang="es">.

<title> This is the text on the title bar of the Web browser, which should match the topic of the page. For example, a general information page may be called "General Information." However, when taken out of context (as in a list of search results) the user would not know whose General Information it was. A more descriptive title would be "General Information - Department of XX." All pages of a site should not have the same title, such as only the agency name.

<meta name="description" content="..."> This is the summary that is displayed when a page comes up in a search results list. The listing shows pages that match the search and a summary of each page. It should be a sentence or two about what the user will find on the page.

6) Footer

The same footer should appear on all pages except official forms, publications, PDFs and documents. The footer contains a horizontal rule (750 pixels wide), text navigation links to the *Tennessee.gov home*, *Search Tennessee.gov*, *A to Z Directory*, *Policies* (privacy, security, accessibility, linking), *Survey*, *Help*, *Site Map*, and *Contact Us*. Appearing below the text navigation should be the State Seal along with the individual department's contact information. This image will be provided by the Governor's office and should link back to the department's contact page (this is the same link as in the horizontal navigation bar). The links for *Search Tennessee.gov*, *A to Z Directory*, *Policies* (privacy, security, accessibility, linking), *Survey*, and *Help* will point back to the NIC servers.

The footer should look like the image below:

[Tennessee.gov Home](#) | [Search Tennessee.gov](#) | [A to Z Directory](#) | [Policies](#) | [Survey](#) | [Help](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Contact Us](#)



Governor's Office
Tennessee State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243-0001
615.741.2001

7) Font Style

Departments may use any standard sans serif font (e.g., Tahoma, Arial, Verdana), but font style should be consistent throughout the Department's Web pages.

8) Search Fields

Departments may choose to provide the option to search their site using google.com. If a department chooses this option the search bar should be located in the left navigation bar. The corresponding code will be provided by NIC upon request.

9) Back Button

All web pages must be designed such so that the browser's back button is operative.

II. Getting to Information

A. Site Maps

To assist with navigation, each page should have a site map or table of contents listed in the footer.

B. Frames

Any use of frames must be approved by the Governor's Office. Frames can be an obstacle to two major goals of the Web site: presenting government as a seamless entity and allowing users to easily locate information and services. They complicate the ability to lead users efficiently to state content because one cannot link to specific pages within frames.

C. Portable Document Format

When linking to a PDF file, the user should be notified that the link leads to an Adobe Acrobat PDF file, especially if the file is very large. While most users do have the Acrobat reader, they may not want to wait for the program and the file to open.

III. Accessibility

The U.S. Department of Justice issued an opinion in September 1996 stating that the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Titles II and III require entities under the ADA to provide effective communication, regardless of whether they generally communicate through print media, audio media, or computerized media such as the Internet. Covered entities that use the Internet for communications regarding their programs, goods, or services must be prepared to offer those communications via an accessible medium.

Accessible Web design also provides benefits to those beyond the community using assistive technology. It provides benefit to users with text-based browsers, low-end processors, slow modem connections, or users who do not have state-of-the-art computer equipment. It also allows for easier access to the Internet via technologies such as internet-enabled phones or personal digital assistants.

Consequently, executive branch agency Web sites shall take reasonable steps to develop Web sites that serve the largest possible audience. Agency Web page developers, designers, programmers, and content providers shall become familiar with the guidelines for achieving Web accessibility and apply them to their official state of Tennessee Web sites.

The guidelines for Tennessee's accessibility initiative are the same as those for federal agencies. Section 508 of the Federal Register establishes requirements for electronic and information technology and the federal Access Board has issued the standards to meet those requirements. They are as follows;

- a. A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided.
- b. Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.
- c. Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.
- d. Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.
- e. Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.
- f. Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.
- g. Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.
- h. Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.
- i. Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
- j. Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
- k. A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of these standards, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.

- l. When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.
- m. When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).
- n. When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.
- o. A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
- p. When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

VI. Other Guidelines

A. Links to State Web Sites

No Web site can control whether or not another Web site will link to it. For those who do ask for permission, the following response may be provided:

“You do not require permission to link to the state of Tennessee Web site. However, be aware that the page you link to may change without notice. Sites linking to state Web pages should periodically verify those links for accuracy.”

B. Links from State Web Sites

Links to Web sites outside the state's domain must meet one of the following criteria:

- 1. Link leads to a site owned by the federal government, a state government, or a local government. The extension of the URL (e.g., .org, .com) does not preclude a site from being linked to as long as the site is under the ownership of one of the above entities.
- 2. Link leads to a non-profit or non-partisan organization. The extension of the URL (e.g., .org, .com) does not preclude a site from being linked to as long as the site is under the ownership of an approved entity.
- 3. Link leads to additional information about government services.
- 4. Link leads to a Web site owned by an entity that has a contractual relationship with the State of Tennessee.

C. Advertising

Commercial advertisements are prohibited on state Web pages.

D. Forms

Official forms are to be displayed on the Internet in the same format approved by records management officials (this includes federal forms). PDF and downloadable text files are acceptable formats for this purpose. Because of the tendency to alter fonts and spacing, forms written in HTML must have the approval of the Records Management Office in General Services. New forms are to be approved by the Records Management Office and assigned a form number. Forms that are modified from its original are to be approved

by the Records Management Office and assigned a form number. Please contact the Records Management Office for more information.

E. Obsolete Pages

Old Web pages that have been replaced by new ones should not be available on the Web servers. If a Web page is not current or not linked from the agency's main Web presence it should be removed.

**Additional tools needed to comply with this policy can be found at the following URL:
<http://www.tennessee.gov/guidelines>*